

THE UPPER XINGU AREA

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IT is also 727

possible that more women may be needed for polygamous marriages, but the data do not indicate plural marriage to be of great significance. [595]

Pillage, also, inspires raids. The Kamayurá threatened to descend on the Trumai, after Quain left, to rob them of all the Western goods they had obtained. The Suyá took all the Trumai pots in a raid which occurred immediately before von den Steinen's second trip through the region.²³ The desire for goods is undoubtedly a motivating factor in particular raids, and it may also be a contributing factor in warfare generally, but since the material surplus is low throughout the area and retaliation almost certain, it is doubtful that this is a basic cause. 721 648

Insults, too, could provoke aggression. The Kamayurá threatened to chastise the Trumai because the latter were rumored to have made defamatory remarks about them. Continuous fear and insecurity can also lead a tribe to attack. Quain observed that the Trumai worked themselves up into such a state of terror that they were capable of desperate deeds. Needless to say, revenge expeditions tended to perpetuate hostility. [52]

Among the Trumai, no special prestige was derived from warfare, and the men did not boast of their prowess as warriors. Trumai men showed scars of old wounds to Quain, but only to impress him with the brutality of other tribes. To the Trumai, warfare was an occasion for fear, and not an opportunity to enhance one's status. 721 555

Warfare, however, is important in maintaining social cohesion within the communities. Quain noted that intra-social harmony and cooperation was low in the Trumai village. Leadership was weak, and there was little friendliness between the men. However, when an attack threatened, quarrels were forgotten and aggressions and anxieties were directed toward the outside world. Also, when members of other tribes were in the village, the whole tone and tempo of life changed, and the Trumai presented a united front. 182 721

This was made manifest during a visit of several Kamayurá. Despite their apprehension, the Trumai treated their guests as long absent brothers. There was much forced and nervous jocularity and talk. The men expressed tremendous affection towards each other and the Kamayurá by embraces and linking of arms. Industry and activity were high. The Trumai men went to catch fish to feed the guests and, upon returning, marched into the village singing gaily and led by their chief. After the Kamayurá left, the village lapsed with relief into its normal way of life. The men ceased to show affection for their comrades, and old quarrels broke out anew. 182 574 609

²³ Von den Steinen 1897, p. 144.

TRUMAI SOCIAL ORGANIZATION

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pursue their individual affairs. Maibu made speeches in the evening men's circle or in the early morning, telling the men to plant their gardens or urging all to gather *piqui* fruit. Such proddings had little meaning, as they were usually made during the appropriate season for these activities, and most people would have planted or gathered as a matter of course. 622 537

Those who did not choose to do what Maibu suggested went their own way, whether it was to fish or sleep. Maibu was a gadfly; yet he was the conscience of the Trumai. Perhaps more people would have procrastinated if it had not been for his admonitions. He was truly interested in the good of the village. He asked Quain for presents only for others, never for himself. 622

Cooperative work on the community level was usually organized by Maibu. The decision to perform such work was generally made by common agreement, but it was the chief's function to recruit the necessary labor and see that the task was done. This he did with varying degrees of success, for his power was limited. 622 476

The chief was accorded much more respect by his housemates and close kinsmen than by the rest of the villagers. The people resisted him in varying degrees, depending on their relationship to him and their individual personalities. His control over the women was particularly weak. When Quain first arrived, they refused to carry water for him, despite Maibu's orders. When they realized that they were to be given gifts for their trouble they grudgingly consented to do so, but, in the meantime, the chief had fetched the water, since the performance of such tasks for an outsider was the responsibility of the village as a whole, and no other man would do women's work. 622 592 554 [123] [574] [609]

Referring to the limitations on chiefly powers, Quain noted, "Maibu has to put up with a lot of boogie and do a lot of talking. Obedience comes to him only after a long time. He seems to have no 'big stick.'" The Trumai chief had no coercive power whatsoever. This particular headman was not a powerful shaman, although such a combination was possible and would undoubtedly have enhanced his position. The only act of a supernatural nature that he could perform was curing by sucking and blowing smoke, which was practiced by almost every adult Trumai male. 622 554 [756] [755]

Maibu was often completely ignored, and some of the men made a point of flouting his authority. The men of Aloari's house were extremely antagonistic toward him and told Quain that he was not a true "ack." These men rarely took part in the few group work projects and usually they were also absent from the wrestling matches. Their own prestige motives and individual inclinations brought them into frequent conflict with Maibu, both in his capacity as the man of highest status and as the village goad. Their resentment of authority never resulted in

THE LIFE CYCLE

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The main motivation for going into the brush to defecate was not modesty, but a feeling of revulsion for body products. One did not eliminate in places frequented by people. Yanahi was disgusted when Quain defecated in his garden and claimed that the garden was ruined. Similarly, it was considered repulsive to defecate in the water. When Quain described the great ship that had brought him to Brazil, the only thing that the Trumai found hard to believe was that the people aboard would have to eliminate in the water. [123]

The rules of etiquette required a person entering or leaving company to make an appropriate statement. The salutation usually consisted of a phrase stating what the person being greeted was doing at the moment. Thus, typical greetings were, "You are eating," "You have returned from fishing," "You are sitting," and so on. When leaving a person or group it was proper to announce, "I am leaving," followed generally by a statement of what one was going to do. If this last was not observed, the departing person was usually asked where he was going. These formalities were not as regularly invoked in the larger gatherings as in house-visiting. 514 827

The rules of etiquette also required the emission of conventionalized cries on particular occasions, such as the bringing of food into the village or the offering of tobacco to guests. In the latter case the person making the presentation cried "aha," the recipient "ha-a-a ha ha ha." These amenities, which were observed between the Trumai, were always louder when an outsider was involved. 576

Hospitality was extended to all upper Xingú Indians and white men who visited the village. In part this was inspired by a fear of their neighbors, in part by etiquette. The Trumai had little reason to fear Quain; yet he was treated with the greatest kindness and consideration, and everyone was eager to converse with him. Indeed, their attentions were so constant that at times he wanted nothing more than to be left alone. 574 123 648

While the men were far more self-assertive than the women, they were also extremely sensitive. They were insulted at the refusal of a request, or at the denial of what they considered to be the recognition due them as individuals. They did not like to be treated as faceless members of a group. During the argument that followed Quain's complaint that some article of his had been stolen, Maibu criticized him for addressing them collectively as "Trumai," while they always called him "*capitão*" or by his name. 152 [123] 576

The Trumai were greatly interested in Western goods and their behavior toward whites was unrestrained. The following quotation from Quain's field notes describes this succinctly: 123 609

The reason why it is so difficult to live with these people is that they are so "impolite." At least in their dealings with me, an outsider, and with the mission- [177]

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123 aries, they are unrestrained in physical contact and in the expression of their momentary sentiments. In many instances their motives are kind and helpful. But their complete lack of shyness makes their sometimes bungling efforts troublesome.

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152 They were more reserved among themselves. Body contact and caresses were absent, as such demonstrations of friendship were unnecessary. The Trumai were different people when outsiders were in the village.

APPENDIX

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post-natal sexual taboos is a serious social problem. A large group of not very pretty bachelors must use the woman with ringworm or the Suyá captive, whose present marriage is considered dishonorable. These women have no brothers or fathers. In contrast with Karajá, there is no stylized homosexuality. Yet the complete freedom of sexual play results in activities which might be considered overt homosexuality. But to the Trumai such activity has little emotional content. It does not seem to set up special personal relationships.

"Women are in constant fear of attack. Yet a wife tyrannizes her husband by withholding her favors and pulling the hair of anyone whom she suspects her husband has used sexually. Between married people, sex occurs at night — preferably when everyone else is asleep — or while going to the forest on various gathering tasks. A man and his wife engage in many things together, such as afternoon relaxation, fishing, and gardening. There is companionship even between those spouses among whom the wife is much older and no longer of interest to the man sexually.

"Between themselves, the men are extremely individualistic. Cooperation rarely exceeds kin limits even at the explicit order of the chief. Only when outsiders are present do men band together in a mock display of solid cooperation. . . . There is only one old man, who is about seventy — all others are under 45 All death is murder. Nobody expects to live longer than the next rainy season. Men always carry bows and arrows for protection. Shamans keep the village in constant fear of attack from the Suyá or Kamayurá. . . . There are imaginary attacks quite often. Men gather in terror at the center of the village — the most exposed spot — and wait to be shot at from the dark bushes at the margin of the village. . . .

"Authority is lax. The patrilineally hereditary chief does no work and is a parasite on his household. He is self-conscious of the rank of his wife whose marriage has elevated her. He lounges in his hammock, but it is his duty to orate from the center of the village at night and sometimes in the morning, urging the men to undertake group projects. He is the only man who has the courage to be an executive. This contrasts with the Kamayurá where there are several chiefs who, uniquely in their culture, are shy and ashamed to speak and whose orders must be referred through special talkers. It also contrasts with the Karajá where the chief is the best worker. . . . When the season changes, the Trumai chief urges the people to engage in the new work, which they would do anyway. An example of the complete independence of spirit is illustrated by the two brothers who would not help the brother-in-law of one build the house in which they all were living, because they thought the mosquitoes would be bad in that location during the rainy season. The brother-in-law built the tremendous house all by himself — the two brothers lived comfortably in it.

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Thirteenth Chapter

Meeting With the Trumai



During the night Castro's canoe, the only one whose load was not brought to shore, floated away; in two hours it travels one legoa; Valentin

and Satyr set out in pursuit.

122 31 Aug. φ 11° 46'.5, λ 31°.6, km. 18.12, total 466.81.

132 4:10 A.M.: I 744.0, dry. 19.2.

6:45 A.M.: I 744.6, II 737.0, dry. 19.4, wet.

19.0, strc. 9°, water 25.8.

5:40 P.M.: I 744.4, II 735.6, dry. 24.8, wet. 21.9, horizon hazy 4, wind = 0, water 27.9.

9:45 P.M.: I 745.0, dry. 20.8.

484 "Vem os compadres! oh, quantas canoas!" suddenly rang
501 out around 10:00; "the compadres are coming; oh, how many
609 canoes!" The soldiers hastened from the nearby camp in the forest; everyone armed himself and watched the canoes drawing up picturesquely in a long row -- and a magnificent sight it was as one after another came around the bend and slowly drifted down the Kulisêu. Two Indians stood erect, with quiet composure, their bows in readiness; a third sat in the center and scarcely moved the oar. We counted 14 canoes and 43 persons.

/191 cont./

484 In perfect order, as though this were a carefully rehearsed theatri-
 501 cal performance /192/ supported by very successful scenery, the
 609 long, narrow craft glided silently along, a considerable distance
 from our praia /sandy shore; see the glossary, p. 172 /, closer to
 [291] the opposite wooded shore; no command sounded. Almost all
 [302] the naked occupants were painted black and bright red on faces
 [299] and bodies, many simply blackened all over with soot; on their
 [41] heads they wore white feather caps, the hair was cut short all
 around, as among the Bakaïrf; the standing ones were overtopped
 by the bows, almost two and a half meters long, and in the left
 hand held a thick bundle of colorfully feathered arrows.

609 Gradually they came to a stop and the stillness was followed
 516 by a dreadful noise, a fanatical howling and bellowing. There
 [101] could be no doubt but that they were Trumaf, for they shouted
 this word incessantly as though their lives depended on it, beat
 their fists against their chests, and at the same time made bows
 with their upper bodies all the more violently since their legs had
 little room for lively gesticulation. Nevertheless, if any of us
 had behaved half as excitedly in the canoe, we would surely have
 fallen hopelessly into the water at the very beginning of the imita-
 tion. But we were on firm ground, and the example is contagious,
 We, too, howled; we, too, bellowed; we, too, beat our chests.
 Everybody shouted whatever he happened to remember of an Indian
 language: "Katú, hekatú Trumaf, Bakaïrf, Kustenaú," inter-
 spersed with an occasional lusty "diavo," heiliges Donnerwetter
 /hang it all/ in German, "don't these fellows have any sense?"

[123] But far from it! No matter how invitingly we waved to
 them, how affably we clapped our hands, how graciously we
 pointed to our campsite, as though we were speaking to the
 Spaniard, "Sir, this house is your house," it did not help in the
 least. It was clear that this performance is official on the
 Schingú; we should be committing a breach of etiquette were we
 to speak of other things before we had thoroughly introduced our-
 selves to each other for half an hour.

/192 cont./

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609 It was necessary to make another attempt; since our Indian was apparently not adequate, Antonio was induced to make a speech in Bakairi. After a little shy resistance, he took heart and shouted across energetically that he was a Bakairi, and that the Bakairi are good, and that the Trumai are also good, and that the Bakairi were friendly to the Trumai, that therefore the Trumai should also be friendly to the Bakairi. Actually, he made himself heard for a moment, but the Trumai realized at once that they did not understand him and outshouted the poor soul, whose voice died away. Hold on, I remember two Trumai words which the Kustenaú chief had told me: apirí, /Illustration appears here/ /193/ "friend," and meijú, our beijú, the mandioca bread. With a truly stentorian voice I therefore cry: "A pirí Trumai, meijú Trumai, apirí." If my purpose had been to fan the storm, I could have been satisfied. The effect was dazzling. My words came back in the loudest echo; I had definitely spoken good Trumai. From the bottom of the canoe they fetched the beijús, which have the shape of large pancakes baked in a pan, and waved this token of peace in the air. Particularly the chief shouter, a young man painted brick-red from head to toe, talked with great enthusiasm about such a cake which he seemed to be demonstrating and explaining like a professor in a classroom.

Some success was noticeable, however; they were quarreling among themselves. The brick-red one was obviously inclined to break off the preliminaries and to enter into closer acquaintance; but one canoe in particular, with three tall, uncanny, coal-black ones, decidedly refused and implored the other heroes not to listen to the words of that demagogue. But the opposition was overruled. Three of our men climbed into a canoe and rowed into the midst of the hostile fleet, laughing kindly and talking; that won their hearts. Still parleying a bit, they approached the shore and finally landed. The black or red, ugly faces, whether the more so by artifice or by nature I do not know, grinned happily in our direction; each of us took one of the fellows by the arm, whereupon a second man of theirs quickly took his other arm; thus we strode, fraternally united, to our campsite.

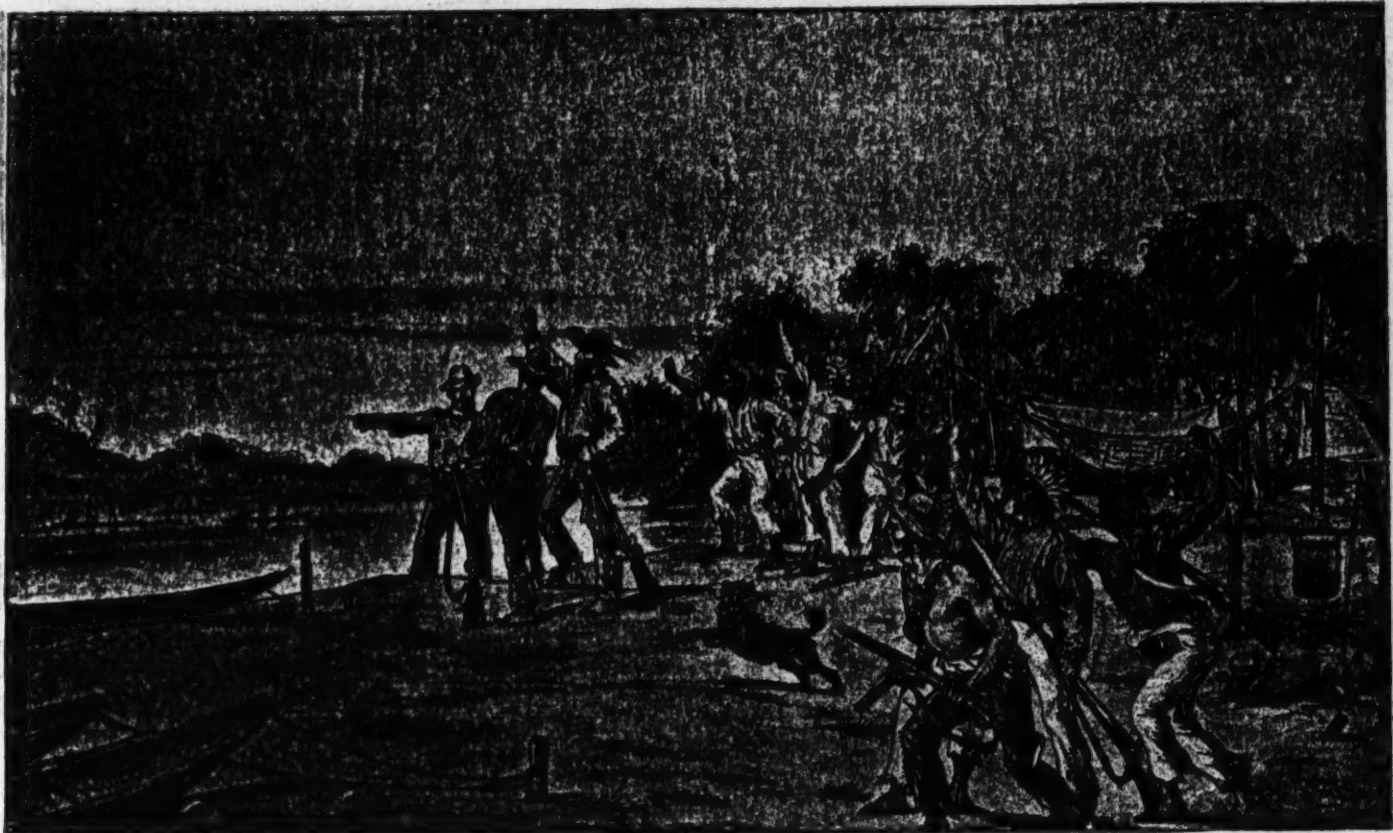
[Text Continues on p. 76]

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1: Steinen--75 D/E-5

(1884) 1886

SP7 Bacairi
Trumai, 1923



Meeting with the Trumai.

/193 cont./

123 Most of them proffered a piece of beijú as a present and at
576 the same time said "má." My companion took my hat, but I
609 respectfully demanded it back. Everything seemed to be going
smoothly; I was among the last, and in front they had already
reached our hammocks.

609 Suddenly I hear a shot behind me; Cousin Wilhelm is
152 standing there, without his hat, gesticulating, his Indian guest
123 is sitting in the sand and kicking and striking with all fours; al-
ready he leaps up. What panic! Are they afraid that the earth
will open up and swallow them? This is primitive fear; there
is no question but that we have thunder and lightning at our com-
mand. With a few leaps all are in the canoes; they push off;
screaming, they row with all their might and do not begin to
calm down a bit until they are in the middle of the river. No
pleading, no peace demonstrations -- we put down the guns
and walk unarmed across the beach -- can persuade them to return.

609 A boat with four of our men is in their midst, I thought
123 /194/ at first with the intention of calming the excited compadres;
but it soon became evident that they wanted some of their things
back, Manoel's pistol, the hats of Castro, Wilhelm, and Antonio,
Quintilian's gun, the ax used for the soundings -- I don't know
what all; it is incredible how they could have taken possession
of all this in the short time.

609 The entire fleet is already on the left side of the Kulisêu.
721 Suddenly a Trumai shoots an arrow toward our canoes, and in a
123 moment the guns of the soldiers are rattling. They assert that
they only fired into the air. A wild scene ensues; all the Indians
leap head over heels out of the canoes, abandon these and their
weapons, swim to the nearby shore, and disappear among the
trees. The soldiers, once having been seized by the furor of
battle, continue to shoot eagerly, no matter how much Castro,
from the shore, tries to order them: rest arms! Finally it is
quiet; they rummage and hunt in all the canoes and start coming
back. There is not a Trumai to be seen anywhere in the forest;
like peaceful staffage, their canoes lie peacefully along the shore,
and only here and there, like a dead bird, a feather ornament
floats on the waves.

/194 cont. /

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[437]
[262] It was only then that we recovered our senses and were able to understand the reason for the incident. Apparently the Trumai had been animated by the urgent desire to barter as soon as possible and with as little ceremony as possible for some of our treasures in exchange for their miserable beijús, which looked gray as though made with buckwheat flour, were coarse-grained, and tasted slightly sour. With this in mind they had been active everywhere. Of Wilhelm's companions, one had been busy with the hunting knife and the other with the gun at the same time, and the latter, while my cousin was trying in the friendliest way to keep them off, had unfortunately pressed the cock. In any case the culprit was the most surprised by the effect; otherwise he would not have been kicking so frightenedly on the ground.

In spite of the miraculous speed with which they dashed to the boats, however, the Trumai had not lost all presence of mind. The two who had just been trying on Castro's and Antonio's hats did not forget in their hasty running to put them on well down over their heads. Another old hand had still found time on his flight to snatch up quickly one of the large fish lying on the beach.

Antonio's behavior when he was so unexpectedly deprived of his precious hat was characteristic. Without further ado he shot his pistol at the thief, but in his rage fortunately missed. And when we /Illustration appears here/ /195/ asked him whether he really wanted to kill the man, he nodded with the greatest composure, "Yes, he had my hat."

126
411 The returning men brought back a rich ethnological collection, at least in terms of the number of objects. The bows were very fine and strong; one was shot to pieces, proof that the shots had not been fired entirely haphazardly. The arrows provided with pointed pieces of bamboo were plentiful; these bamboo blades, which, as could be easily seen, had been freshly sharpened, are only loosely inserted in the shaft with a little resin; after the arrow has reached its mark, they break off and remain embedded in the body. There was a single club, crudely worked, flat, 86 centimeters long. One feather ornament was particularly pretty: the green, orange-colored, and white feathers were mounted on

[Text continues on p. 79]

/196 cont./

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The incident, which basically has put me in a bad humor, is all the more unpleasant since the soldiers are very delighted about it; they regard it as a sort of easy victory about which they would like to boast. Many also do not consider the "bravo," the savage, worth better treatment, and those who are full-blooded Indians themselves judge most severely. Antonio is still very dissatisfied, although the feather ornament that he procured for himself in place of the unfortunate hat looks much better on him.

[123]

We need not doubt but that none of the Trumai was hit by a bullet; all the men agree about this. They are very good-hearted by nature; they pulled out of the water one boy who, they say, could not swim.

● 609
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Now and then the view is expressed that the Trumai had a secret disarmament plan. To be sure, the Bakaïri had warned us in this respect; they described in detail how the Trumai would receive strangers in a friendly manner, wheedle their weapons from them, and then attack the unsuspecting ones; they would wrench their arms out of their shoulder joints -- "pok, pok, pok," the narrators graphically described it -- tie their hands together, and toss the thus mutilated bodies into the river.

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Thanks be to the gods if we have escaped such a fate. For the time being, however, I shall deeply regret this day. In popular Brazilian belief, August is an unlucky month. Well, at least we are already at the thirty-first.

And the poor Trumai are worse off than we are. When they arrive home in their miserable array, deprived of all their weapons and yet none wounded, what will their beloved wives say? Has anything like that ever happened on the Schingü? It will be difficult for the heroes to report their deeds in such a way that praise and honor will be due them; the two trophies so bravely salvaged will play an important role. If not two heads, at least they are bringing home two hats. One of them plaited out of straw, can be understood, explained, but the other, a gray felt -- where are there forest animals whose skin bears hair not only on the outside, but also on the inside? Oh, riddle of life!